

MEDIA RELEASE

Minister for Employment, Education and Training
The Hon. J S Dawkins, M.P.

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OVER 50,000 NEW JOBS IN AUGUST

The ABS preliminary labour force figures for August 1988 show a strong rise in employment of 50,900 following a fall of 9,500 in the previous month. This increase is the largest monthly employment rise since January this year.

Mr Dawkins said that the rise in employment was confirmation of continuing strength in the labour market. Over the year employment growth remains very strong.

Total employment rose by 233,200 or 3.3 per cent over the year to the three months to August 1988 and employment has now risen by 1,096,400 or 17.4 per cent since the Hawke Government came to office.

This participation rate also rose strongly, by 0.4 percentage points to 62.3 per cent, resulting in an increase in the number of unemployed persons of 14,000 to 554,600. The unemployment rate rose slightly, by 0.1 percentage points to 7.0 per cent.

Mr Dawkins said the rise in unemployment represented an adjustment following the large fall of 44,200 in the number of unemployed persons in July. Monthly figures are subject to considerable volatility. Trend estimates of unemployment show a decline of around 50,000 persons since the beginning of 1988.

Mr Dawkins also said that while the unemployment rate rose by 0.1 percentage points in the month of August 1988 it was 1.1 percentage points lower than for the same period last year. ABS trend estimates show a continuing downward trend in the unemployment rate in 1988 from 7.7 per cent in January to 7.1 per cent in August.

Despite a small increase in teenage full-time unemployment rate this month (up 0.8 percentage points), teenage unemployment has fallen markedly over the past year. The number of teenagers unemployed and looking for full-time work fell by 24,700 or 20.3 per cent to 97,100 (6.9 per cent of the teenage population) over the year to the three months to August 1988 and the teenage full-time unemployment rate fell by 4.2 percentage points to 18.2 per cent.

The proportion of the teenage population unemployed and looking for full-time work has fallen from 12.2 per cent in April 1983 to 6.9 per cent in August 1988. ABS trend estimates show a continuing downward trend in teenage full-time unemployment.

Mr Dawkins noted that State estimates showed employment increases in all States in August 1988. The States with the strongest employment growth over the year to August 1988 were Queensland (6.0 per cent), Western Australia (5.4 per cent) and New South Wales (5.0 per cent). Victoria remained the State with the lowest unemployment rate in August 1988 at 6.1 per cent.

Mr Dawkins said that further employment growth is likely over the next few months. The ANZ vacancies series rose by 3.6 per cent in August 1988 and by 24.2 per cent over the year and remains at a record high level, suggesting that the labour market should continue to perform well.

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